carriers compares favourably with private domestic airlines and foreign carriers. However, there is always scope for improvement in different areas of operations.

(b) and (c) Both the airlines being public sector undertakings face some competitive disadvantage *vis-a-vis* their private sector counterparts. In particular, the process of decision making involves various procedures and levels and as such takes a longer time. Besides, the two national carriers are also required to fulfil certain socio-economic obligations.

(d) Both the airlines constantly endeavour to take measures to improve their product and remain competitive in the market. The airlines are in the process of acquiring modern aircraft in order to revamp their fleet.

Merger of IA with AI

1374. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for the merger of the Indian Airlines with Air India;

(b) if so, what is the basis of the proposal and what are the expected advantages;

(c) whether Government have consulted the trade unions and employees associations on this matter; and

(d) if so, what is their opinion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Although the Government's attempt is to ensure better synergy between two national carriers, there is no proposal for their merger.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Mountain Airlines for North-Eastern Region

1375. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that a proposal has been mooted to establish a mountain airlines to cater to the specific needs of the North-Eastern Region which is always susceptible to vagaries of the weather;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its present status; and

(c) the details of plans drawn up, if any to acquire suitable planes and also to create or upgrade the existing infrastructural facilities required for providing dependable air travel facilities in the ever changing whether conditions of North-East?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) At present, no such proposal is under consideration of the Government.

Wastage of fuel

†1376. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state the number of times aeroplanes had to keep flying in air waiting for landing due to non-availability of space on runway since 1st January, 2005 and the amount spent on wastage of fuel due to this reason?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): Average delay of incoming flights at Metro airports is approximately 25 minutes per flight during peak hours. On an average 10 to 12 arrivals are delayed per hour. The cost of additional fuel incurred due to delay of flights by some major airlines is as under:—

Air India - Rs. 75 lakhs per month (approx)

Jet Airways - Rs. 4.8 lakhs per day

Air Deccan - Rs. 10 lakhs per month (approx)

Kingfisher Airlines - Rs. 9.6 crores per month

Spicejet - Rs. 13.41 lakhs (gross)

Go Airlines - Rs. 10.2 lakhs (approx).

Indian Airlines does not maintain any separate data for the extra fuel spent due to delay of flights.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.